

## WEC CARES Webinar FAQ UPDATED June 19, 2020

Morning Session:

**Our public works crew build plexiglass shields for me. Are their wages covered under the CARES subgrant?**

Yes. If the public works crew was working on COVID-19 election related items, then they would be covered under the WEC CARES Subgrant. Working on items to assist with the safety and health of the polling place is a COVID-19 election related need. If the public works crew worked on shields for several purposes at once, you will need to be able to separate out and document how many hours were spent on the shields for elections.

**Our county clerk is going to bill us for partial reimbursement of additional absentee envelopes he had printed. Are counties eligible for the CARES subgrant and if so, he/she should not be billing us? Please explain.**

The WEC CARES Subgrant is only available for municipalities. Counties are not eligible to receive these funds. The provider/reliant relationships between counties and municipalities are unique to each of their situations and the expenses between them should be discussed through those avenues. If a municipality is billed for election costs that are due to the pandemic, the amount that municipalities pay to the counties for these allowable expenses are eligible under the CARES subgrant and should be tracked and reported.

**Normal number of absentees I mail out is 12. This year we had 156 absentee voters, many of them in person here at the municipality center. What can be charged, if anything, for those in person ballots? What about the clerk's time spent processing those?**

Staff time for processing the higher volume of absentee ballots, whether in-person or by mail, would be covered under the WEC CARES Subgrant program. In-person absentee ballots would also have costs for any additional certification envelopes and might have costs for the leasing of additional space to accept in-person absentee ballots while maintaining social distancing and protective equipment in those locations.

**Why a report thru September 1 and then on December 1?**

The September 15 check-in of expenditures from January 20, 2020 through September 1, 2020 is a way for the WEC Staff to help clerks with anything they might require ensuring they can complete the Final Pandemic Expenditure Report. The check-in is almost a trial run for the December 1 report. If a municipality does not turn in the December 1 report, that municipality could need to return all their received funds. We do not want that to happen. The check-in will help you and us make sure that you are on-track.

**Anything purchased for the April election that can be used for August and November election as well cannot be claimed?**

No, these purchases can be all be claimed. If you had additional 2020 election-related costs due to the pandemic for the April, May, Aug, and Nov elections, if those costs are within the allowable uses, those costs would all apply to this CARES subgrant. The WEC Staff's recommendation has been to focus the funds on preparing for August and November since we do not know how those elections will go, but the funds can be used for any of the elections in 2020 impacted by COVID-19.

**I will need a new copier and printer for the upcoming elections, will this be allowed for subgrant money?**

Yes, if the copier and printer are required to help offset the time spent processing the increase in absentee requests due to COVID-19. If any equipment you buy is equal or greater than \$5000 per unit, you should report that under the "Equipment" category; if it costs less than \$5000 per unit, please report it under the appropriate category, most likely "Ballot Supplies, Printing, & Postage."

**Can we use subgrant money for Badger Books?**

If a current Badger Book user chose to purchase an additional Badger Book machine for processing more absentee ballots due to the COVID-19 Pandemic on election day, they could

count the purchase towards the WEC CARES Subgrant. Please keep in mind, that WEC is not bringing on new users at this time and the Badger Book supplier is backordered for months. The CARES federal grant only covers pandemic related costs for the 2020 election cycle, so if the Badger Book cannot be used in this year's elections, then it is not allowable. Also, if Badger Books were purchased prior to the pandemic and not with the purpose of helping with pandemic-related needs, those Badger Books would not be allowable.

**Can you provide a list of items that do/would qualify for grant money?**

Yes, the WEC CARES Subgrant agreement outlines areas and gives examples of items that would fall into those areas as allowable use of the funds. If you still have questions as it relates to your specific situation and purchase, please contact the WEC CARES Subgrant Team.

**On the signing of the agreement, for those that are multiple county which county do we sign for? Or is there a form for each county that we must sign?**

Since the WEC CARES Subgrant is municipality-based we require a county be marked so we ensure each municipality just receives one set of funding. If your municipality is in multiple counties, you can write "Multiple Counties" and we will understand which municipality it is.

**For those that "group" all election supplies for postage, etc; if we take the 2016 absentees and compare with this year's is that okay to use to determine our normal postage?**

Yes, using your 2016 data as comparison would be a reasonable way to determine how many absentee ballots and staff time processing are "additional." You will need to document the method(s) you use to justify that your costs that you report are due to the pandemic and comparing to a similar election year (presidential) is a reasonable method.

**So just to be clear - all municipalities receive the \$200 plus the \$1.10 per registered voter - correct?**

Correct. Each municipality will receive an automatic \$200 plus the \$1.10 per registered voter based on their June 1, 2020 numbers. These numbers can be found on the WEC Website under the Statistics page. After you send in the signed agreement, we will send out your award based on that formula.

**What category will the barriers fall into? We made shields that each election workers had between them and the elector?**

Plexiglass shields and barriers would fall under the Personal Protective Equipment category.

**We need to purchase additional voting machines to handle the additional absentee ballots. Would this be an expense that could be submitted?**

If additional voting machines were necessary for COVID-19 related 2020 election activities, then they would be an allowable use of the WEC CARES Subgrant. If they are over \$5,000 then they would fall into the Equipment category. Please just ensure the necessary use of this equipment as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic is documented properly. If you had already budgeted and planned on buying additional voting machines, then those purchased would not be due to the pandemic and would not be allowable. Also, you need to have the machine in place for use in this year's elections for it to apply under this CARES Subgrant so be aware of any supplier backorders.

**Will we need to submit copies of invoices, receipts etc. for expenses?**

No, invoices, receipts, etc., will not need to be submitted. The only item that needs to be submitted to the WEC is the Pandemic Expenditure Report. However, all documentation,

including invoices and receipts are required and will need to be maintained through until December 31, 2024 for potential future audits.

**Registered voters change every day. Will there be a specific day to use for the formula?**

Yes, the June 1, 2020 registered voter numbers. These numbers can be found on the WEC website under the statistics page.

**Can I purchase a forehead thermometer to check individuals as they vote in person?**

Yes, that is an allowable expense under "Protective Equipment" category.

**We budgeted a significantly larger amount for elections for this year and it will likely cover us. Is it worth applying for the grant?**

Yes, these funds are not just for things that are unbudgeted, but costs that were unexpected and due to the COVID-19 pandemic. If something within the allowable uses outlined in the agreement was purchased for elections and because of the pandemic, it is an allowable use of the CARES Subgrant funds. You should be documenting (even writing on the invoice/receipt) how each cost is pandemic-related and for the elections.

**If we are applying April's Election to a FEMA grant, do you still want on the April Election purchases included?**

Since the webinar the WEC CARES subgrant has changed its reporting requirements and you will now only need to report those expenditures from the funds received. If a municipality receives a subgrant from another federal program, they should keep the expenditures for each subgrant separate. Each expenditure may only be applied to one federal program.

**All postage over and above our normal budget for absentees is covered under this grant, including April through November?**

Yes, all additional 2020 election postage due to the pandemic is included in the WEC CARES subgrant. Report all your additional 2020 election postage for the Apr, May, Aug, and Nov elections. However, the purpose of this subgrant is for funds be focused on the upcoming two elections in August and November though, to ensure that you are properly prepared to perform your election duties.

**Do we have to have a separate account for these expenses?**

Municipalities do not need to have a separate bank account to receive their WEC CARES Subgrant funds. However, you will need to be able to track all expenditures made with these funds. This could be as easy as a well-kept notebook or excel sheet where you list and tally all 2020 election expenditures related to the pandemic or as sophisticated as coding in an accounting system. You will receive in the subgrant materials a Subgrant Expenditure Tracking excel template for you to optionally use. You may customize this excel template as you wish.

**What about a printer?**

A printer is an allowable use of the WEC CARES Subgrant if its use is due to COVID-19 election needs. If its cost is under \$5000, please report it under the most appropriate category, most likely Ballot Supplies/Printing/Postage. As well, ensure to document how the printer was a pandemic related cost.

**Would we still get the absentee postage subgrant even though we are going through another federal grant?**

The WEC CARES Subgrant was originally designed as a postage subgrant but was later revised to be the program it is now to provide more funding and more flexibility for other COVID-19

election related needs. This has allowed municipalities to receive more funding than just that for postage and the ability to decide where they best need the funds be used as they relate to COVID-19 and elections. If you are applying for other federal funding (FEMA, Routes to Recovery, etc.) then the expenditures you report in one must not be reported also in a second. You may still apply for more than one federal grant/subgrant, but you will need to keep your expenditures separate.

### **What about if we are getting reimbursed from a State Reimbursement?**

If the costs that your municipality are being paid by another source (federal, state, county or other), then those are no longer your costs and they should not be reported to a second source for reimbursement. So, no, each expenditure must only be submitted to one reimbursement program. (The State "Routes to Recovery" is also a federal CARES Act subgrant.). Since the webinar the WEC CARES subgrant has changed its reporting requirements and you will now only need to report those expenditures from the allocated funds amount.

### **So can we "reimburse" ourselves for plexiglass shields that were purchased for the April Election, but will then be used for August and November?**

Yes, if you choose to you can use the WEC CARES subgrant towards expensed you incurred for the April election, especially if these are items you will use in August and November. Since the webinar the WEC CARES subgrant has changed its reporting requirements and you will now only need to report those expenditures from the funds you receive.

### **But our counties must bill us in November for additional costs as reliers?**

If you have costs that would apply to this subgrant, you may still report them through November 30, 2020. The provider/reliar relationship between counties and municipalities is

handled outside of the WEC Staff channels. How they decide to handle the responsibilities between the provider and relier is at the discretion of the parties involved.

**Will there be another subgrant to get further money for the municipalities later down the road to cover more overages in the budget?**

The WEC CARES Subgrant is the only program currently approved by the commission to offer funds to municipalities to offset the expenses incurred during the COVID-19 Pandemic as it relates to its impact on 2020 Elections. If municipalities require more assistance, please look into the Routes to Recovery or FEMA subgrant programs.

**Could an additional Express Voting machine be covered to better assist the large number of in-person absentee voters so that ballots are completed correctly?**

If additional voting machines are necessary for COVID-19 related 2020 election activities, then they would be an allowable use of the WEC CARES Subgrant. If they are over \$5,000 then they would fall into the Equipment category. Please just ensure the necessary use of this equipment as it relates to the COVID-19 pandemic is documented properly. If you had already budgeted and planned on buying additional voting machines, then those purchased would not be due to the pandemic and would not be allowable. Also, you need to have the machine in place for use in this year's elections for it to apply under this CARES Subgrant so be aware of any supplier backorders.

**This is only for Election expenses, correct? Extra expenses for the Police Department would NOT go in this correct?**

Correct, the WEC CARES Subgrant is only for those COVID-19 related expenses as they impact elections. Expenses covered in other departments must have been due to work they completed to carryout elections in 2020 in relation to the pandemic.

**What kind of documentation would we show for metered postage?**

You should be able to show, most likely by a comparison of number of absentee ballots mailed in 2016 to the number mailed in 2020, that the claimed postage is additional and, we will assume, due to the pandemic. Those additional ballots' metered postage would then be allowable.

**We paid \$2/hour hazard pay & anticipate doing again. Is that premium (that was not budgeted) allowed?**

Yes, hazard pay is due to the pandemic. That additional pay in election tasks would all be allowable under this subgrant.

**Do you have a boiler plate format for us to use to record our expenses?**

The WEC Staff has created a Subgrant Expenditure Tracker template to make tracking expenses from the WEC CARE Subgrant and moving those numbers to the Subgrant Expenditure Report, required on September 15 and December 1 easier to complete. You may customize the Expenditure Tracking template to best suit your needs.

**How much detail is required for reporting expenditures? Invoices, payroll reports, etc.**

For reporting, you will only need to submit your total expenditures in the seven allowable uses categories. The check-in due September 15th and final Pandemic Expenditure Report due December 1<sup>st</sup> will be completed on the Excel document WEC Staff created and will be released for download with the original CARES Subgrant Agreement. Invoices, payroll reports, etc., will not be required to be sent along with that report. However, you must have sufficient

documentation (invoices, payroll reports, etc.) for all reported expenditures and file and maintain that documentation until December 31, 2024 with the report.

**We have two smaller drop boxes that we have used for residents to drop payments in. We let people also put Absentee Ballots in those, but the box was overflowing within an hour or two on some days, especially on weekends when we are closed. Could I use these funds to replace those drop boxes with larger ones?**

Yes, replacing those drop boxes with larger ones to accommodate the increased volume of absentee ballots would be allowable under this subgrant, including installation and security necessary. Those costs would be reported under the Drop-Box category.

**Can you put in for additional funds given to poll workers as a thank you or benefit for working on election day?**

No, thank you gifts or bonuses are not allowable under this subgrant.

**Would overtime for clerks count?**

Yes, overtime for clerks will count if it was for election work and due to COVID-19.

**Would paying election workers \$2.00 more an hour be covered under this subgrant?**

Yes, if that increase in pay was not just a routine or expected pay increase, but the intent is as "Hazard Pay," that would be allowable under this subgrant. If you expect that that increased rate might continue into future years even without a pandemic risk, then no, that is just increased pay that is not due to the pandemic and would not count.

**We have a generous amount in our election account for this year on account of the presidential election, however, we would put the unused remainder into another account once the elections are over - could we still apply for the grant if our budget isn't exhausted? Obviously, we have increased expenses due to the virus.**

The WEC CARES Subgrant can be used for any expenses that were incurred for COVID-19 Pandemic relief efforts in the 2020 elections. This is separate of budgeted costs and only relates to that of pandemic relief activities. If a municipality still has leftover budget after the additional expenses, that is okay. This subgrant is for pandemic related elections needs, needs that were not expected.

**When is the reimbursement set to be sent when approved? In the 2020 budget or 2021?**

The WEC CARES Subgrant funds will be distributed as soon as a municipality fills out and sends back the CARES Subgrant Agreement and Certification Form. This form is set to be email and available for download on Friday June 12, 2020 and is to be returned no later than September 1, 2020.

**We typically have 2 poll workers and 1 chief inspector. For the April election we had the normal 3 people but then had 2 extra people that we paid to do sanitizing and help with absentee ballots. My understanding is we can only receive the funds on the 2 extra people?**

Yes, since the 2 additional people were required to cover COVID-19 related needs, they would be covered, but since the other 3 are used in every election they would not be covered.

However, if those regular three people had more paid time than usual processing the increased number of absentee ballots, then that additional time would also be included in this subgrant.

**How do you document additional staff?**

All documentation should be as detailed as possible. Document everyone's name, location, dates of work, times of work, activities performed, pay, and note that that individual was additional to normal presidential-year elections due to the increased needs from the pandemic by referencing your 2016 election staffing needs.

**Can the fund be used towards additional hours for the clerk / poll workers?**

Yes, as long as these additional hours were related to COVID-19 Pandemic Election work.

**Would purchase of additional computers with Windows 10 qualify as we have additional staff working in WisVote due to the absentee demand?**

The purchase of additional computer(s) for staff to work on the higher level of absentee requests would be an allowable purchase as long as the purchase was specifically for election needs due to the pandemic and not already planned for before the pandemic. Those costs, if under \$5000 per unit, would be reported under Ballot Supplies/Printing/Postage. If this is to replace a computer that has expired or a first-time purchase, please also check into the WEC's Election Security Subgrant program.

**If I never had an outside ballot drop box, would one qualify?**

Yes, if the outside absentee ballot drop box is a need to help cover COVID-19 social distancing protocols and the influx of absentee ballot requests, it would fall under an allowable use for the CARES Subgrant funds under the Drop Box category Installation and security costs relating to drop-boxes are also allowable.

**I had to hire a door greeter to spray hand sanitizer and clean during elections. Is that extra person's wage covered by the grant?**

Yes, additional staffing required to help with proper COVID-19 sanitization practices, that would be covered under the WEC CARES Subgrant under the Staffing category.

**Will we really have to pay back the funds if we do not use them?**

Yes, if there are leftover funds from the WEC CARES Subgrant, they need to be returned to the WEC by December 15, 2020.

**Can the money be used for rental of additional edge machine or optical scan machine?**

If the COVID-19 Pandemic requires additional equipment such as an Edge machine or Optical Scan Machine, then the rental of that equipment would be covered under the WEC CARES Subgrant. Municipalities just need to ensure they document the expense and why it is a COVID-19 Pandemic related purchase.

**Would this cover the Dymo label printers?**

Yes, these funds will cover the purchase of a Dymo label printer if it found that it is a necessary purchase due to the higher volume of absentee requests. Municipalities just need to ensure they document the expense and why it's a COVID-19 Pandemic related purchase.

**I put more of a workload on my deputy clerk, can I include her extra wages for these elections as an expense?**

Yes, additional staffing for election work that was required due to the COVID-19 pandemic can be covered by the CARES Subgrant and would be reported under the Staffing category.

**Would additional voting booths count?**

Yes, additional voting booths that are required for social distancing due to the COVID-19 pandemic can be covered by the CARES Subgrant. Just ensure you properly document how this was a pandemic-related cost.

**Are meals for the additional election workers who had to be hired beyond our typical budgeted workers be an eligible expense?**

No, meals and travel expenses will not be covered under the WEC CARES Subgrant due to there being so many federal regulations on meals and travel expenses.

**Our municipality has already exceeded our allotted amount of COVID-19 election-related expenses. Is there any potential for additional allocations?**

No, the WEC CARES Subgrant will be a one-time payment of funds to help offset pandemic related expenditures for 2020 elections. If municipalities need further financial assistance due to the pandemic's impact, please research the Routes to Recovery subgrant or FEMA subgrants.

**If county provided the extra absentee envelopes for the April 7, 2020 election, can the town claim the expenses for these extra envelopes provided by the county?**

No, those would currently be a county expense. If the county then bills the municipality for election related expenditures due to the pandemic, then those expenses, since they are now municipality's expenses, may be claimed.

**Are the costs of the Board of Canvass we had on April 13th an eligible cost under this program? Especially if we had extra poll workers to assist on April 13th?**

If due to the COVID-19 Pandemic there were additional poll workers required to process the higher number of absentee ballots and handle sanitization practices their costs can be covered by the CARES Subgrant funds and would be reported under the Staffing category.

**The \$200 is only paid once for each municipality and not per voter, correct? OR is it per voter? The \$1.10 is for each voter for each election?**

Yes, the \$200 is a one-time base payment that will go to every municipality no matter the number of registered voters. The \$1.10 will be provided for each registered voter and is not provided for both elections but is just a one-time payment. The subgrant award payment will be issued soon after WEC receives the signed CARES Subgrant Agreement and Certification Form from a municipality. That form will be emailed and available for download starting on Friday, June 12, 2020 and must be returned by September 1, 2020 to participate in this subgrant program.

**We are purchasing an Optical Scan Machine because of the increased amount of absentee ballots to be processed. We didn't budget this year for the expense. Is that covered?**

If the Optical Scan Machine is a purchase due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the higher volume of absentee ballots, it can be covered under the CARES Subgrant. Municipalities just need to maintain documentation expressing how the purchases were because of COVID-19.

**Do the funds have to be approved by the Board?**

The approval of the CARES Subgrant Agreement and Certification form is dependent on the municipality's governance structure and who is considered by the municipality an Authorized Representative. There are some clerks that have authority to accept funds up to a certain

amount without seeking board or council approval. Each municipality will have to refer to their own usual processes and procedures for designating who will fill out the agreement.

**If we budgeted \$110 per day for a poll worker, but end up paying them more to work on election day, is the additional funds eligible?**

If the additional amount paid to a poll worker was specifically due to the pandemic, such as for Hazard Pay or additional time to disinfect the location or for additional absentee ballot processing, then that additional amount would be eligible under this subgrant. You will need to document (write down and preserve along with the expenditure) your justification for how this additional pay is due to the pandemic.

**What are the additional reporting and documentation required for allowable equipment purchases?**

“Equipment” is defined in the Code of Federal Regulations (2 CFR §200.33) in this way:  
“Equipment means tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost which equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the non-Federal entity for financial statement purposes, or \$5,000. See also §§200.12 Capital assets, 200.20 Computing devices, 200.48 General purpose equipment, 200.58 Information technology systems, 200.89 Special purpose equipment, and 200.94 Supplies.”

You will need to follow the CFR for guidance on expenditures pertaining to capital assets.

The only report that the WEC will require on December 1, 2020 is the Pandemic Expenditure report and will not require receipts or invoices.

**We are getting permanent glass to cover our windows due to COVID-19. Will this expense be covered?**

Even though this is a permanent fixture, if you are installing that feature because of the pandemic and 2020 election activities, this would be covered at least in part. For it to be

considered a “reasonable” expense, you should do a cost comparison with a more temporary fixture, such as a plexiglass barrier, and may then claim the amount up to the plexiglass barrier unless you can also document that a plexiglass barrier would not be a viable solution for your circumstance. You would then save that documentation used to justify your expenditures.

#### Afternoon Session:

**Do we receive our entire grant award up front and report actual expenditures? Or submit the request for reimbursement up to the grant max?**

Municipalities will receive their entire subgrant award immediately after they fill out and send back the CARES Subgrant Agreement and Certification Form. The subgrant will be a one time payment.

**If we made alteration to our town hall to protect our voters and poll workers, can we put that as an expense and where would that go?**

That would depend on the alterations. Ordinarily, structural/building changes are not allowable unless pre-approved, but please reach out to WEC for specific guidance.

**Will the CARES Subgrant funds cover the ballot counting after the election in April?**

Since there was an additional day mandated for the April election to count those late ballots impacted by COVID-19, the extra staffing time would be covered under the CARES Subgrant.

**Are wash stations a covered expense?**

If renting extra wash stations is being done to ensure more hand washing areas for COVID-19 sanitization practices for the election, the rental fees could be covered under the CARES Subgrant. If your municipality purchased wash stations, it is likely that their use would be for

much more than elections and should be claimed, instead, with the more general Routes to Recovery subgrant via the governor and DOA.

**If we have our payroll and expenses coded as COVID-19 when appropriate, is that acceptable documentation?**

That is great tracking but is not sufficient documentation. Documentation includes receipts, invoices, emails, payroll data, and even hand-written notes adding justification as to why that specific expense is a pandemic related election expense.

**If costs go over what is allocated for August and November elections will the overage be reimbursed?**

No, there will not be another reimbursement from the CARES Subgrant program for additional expenses that may be incurred during August and November. The CARES Subgrant program is being utilized to help offset those costs but is not expected to cover all costs associated with the 2020 elections.

**Can we ask for reimbursement of April's funds from the Routes to Recovery subgrant? And report them for this subgrant?**

No, if a reimbursement is received for purchases made through another federal grant program, they cannot be reported on this elections CARES Subgrant report. We recommend using the CARES Subgrant for any election related areas that will not be covered under the Road to Recovery grant, and those areas that are otherwise not being claimed through another subgrant/reimbursement program should all be reported even if over the subgrant amount.

**Is the State considering the state or county mailing out and receiving all absentee ballots?**

Currently, the WEC Staff is preparing a statewide mailing to assist voters with the absentee request process. This mailer will point them towards MyVote, but also offer an option for those voters who cannot access the website. The Commission has not approved the mailer yet, but when there is an approved mailer we will allow clerks to view it.

**If we purchase a new printer, and it goes over the amount allowed, then I will have no money to send back correct?**

Correct. If an approved purchase is made that extends beyond the subgrant funds that a municipality receives, then no funds will need to be returned to the WEC. You should still report all election, pandemic-related expenditures that are not being claimed under another subgrant/reimbursement program.

**Is there a specific dymo printer that works best with WIS VOTE?**

We recommend a 450/450 turbo but a 400 turbo has worked for our WisVote specialists as well.